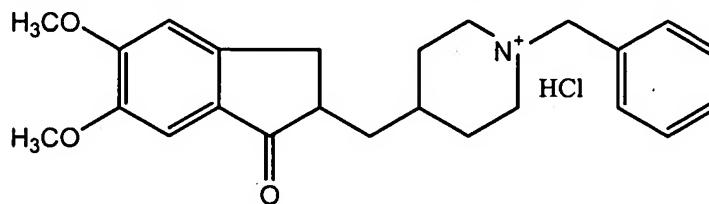


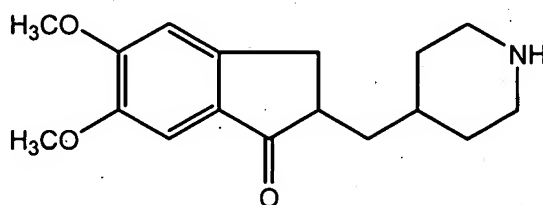
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process for the preparation of 1-benzyl-4-[(5,6-dimethoxy-1-indanon)-2-yl] methylpiperidine hydrochloride (Donepezil HCl) of the Formula I



Formula I

comprising hydrogenating 5,6-dimethoxy-2-(pyridin-4-yl) methylene indan-1-one with a noble metal catalyst or a non-oxide derivative of a noble metal catalyst in a solvent at 20-100°C and 10-90 psi gauge pressure to form 4-[(5,6-dimethoxy-1-indanon)-2-yl] methyl piperidine of the Formula II



Formula II

which is alkylated with an alkylating agent in an organic solvent at 20-80°C.

2. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of C₁-C₄ aliphatic alcohol, organic acid, dilute HCl, ethyl acetate, aliphatic ketone, and mixtures thereof.
3. The process according to Claim 2, wherein the solvent is acetic acid.
4. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the noble metal catalyst is selected from the group consisting of palladium, rhodium, and ruthenium.
5. The process according to Claim 4, wherein the noble metal catalyst is palladium.
6. The process according to Claim 5, wherein the palladium is at 10% concentration.

7. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the non-oxide derivative of a noble metal catalyst is a chloride or a sulphate of a noble metal selected from the group consisting of palladium, rhodium, and ruthenium.

8. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the noble metal catalyst or the non-oxide derivative of a noble metal catalyst is supported on a carrier.

9. The process according to Claim 8, wherein the carrier is selected from the group consisting of carbon, calcium carbonate, barium sulphate, and alumina.

10. The process according to Claim 9, wherein the carrier is carbon.

11. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at 70-80°C.

12. The process according to Claim 11, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at about 75°C.

13. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at 45-55 psi gauge.

14. The process according to Claim 13, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out at about 50 psi gauge.

15. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the alkylation is carried out with benzyl bromide.

16. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the alkylation is carried out in methylene dichloride and triethylamine mixture.